

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3500  
WHITEHOUSE WASH DC IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 20509

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: OVIP IS JO EG (STAPLETON, RUTH CARTER)  
SUBJECT: TRAVEL OF RUTH CARTER STAPLETON

REF: (A) JERUSALEM 2481, (B) CAIRO 20440

1. SHORTLY BEFORE RECEIPT REF A MR. WADIE FAHMY HERMINA, LOCAL EGYPTIAN BUSINESSMAN AND PROMINENT MEMBER OF COPTIC CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY, CALLED ON CHARGE TO EXPLAIN THAT HE HAD BEEN IN TOUCH WITH MRS. STAPLETON AND DR. MCBIRNIE DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO U.S. ABOUT MRS. STAPLETON'S VISIT TO EGYPT. MR. HERMINA, WHO HAS HAD CONTACT WITH EMBASSY BEFORE BUT IS NOT WELL KNOWN TO US, SAID HE HAD OBTAINED WRITTEN APPROVAL FROM PRIME MINISTER SALEM, MINISTER OF CULTURE AND INFORMATION EL SAWI AND DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION SAAD EL DIN TO INVITE MRS. STAPLETON TO VISIT EGYPT, AND THAT HE WAS ANXIOUSLY AWAITING A MESSAGE FROM THE STAPLETON PARTY IN TEL AVIV. HERMINA WENT ON THAT HE WANTED TO HAVE THE VARIOUS CHRISTIAN CHURCHES ANNOUNCE DURING SEPT 10 SUNDAY CHURCH SERVICES THAT MRS. STAPLETON WOULD ADDRESS THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AT THE  
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COPTIC CATHEDRAL DURING REGULAR FRIDAY EVENING SERVICE ON SEPT 15. HE THEREFORE WISHED TO CONFIRM THAT MRS. STAPLETON WOULD BE STAYING THROUGH FRIDAY EVENING SEPT 15, AS THIS WAS THE ONLY TIME DURING HER VISIT WHEN THE CONGREGATIONS COULD BE ASSEMBLED. CHARGE SAID HE WOULD PASS THIS MESSAGE ON AND ADVISE HIM OF MRS. STAPLETON'S RESPONSE.

2. AFTER RECEIPT REF A CHARGE FINALLY SUCCEEDED AFTER SEVERAL HOURS IN REACHING MR. HERMINA BY PHONE TO PASS ON MRS. STAPLETON'S MESSAGE. HE WAS OBVIOUSLY DISAPPOINTED THAT MRS. STAPLETON WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO SPEAK AT FRIDAY EVENING SERVICE ON SEPT 15. AFTER CONSIDERABLE DISCUSSION HE ASKED THAT MRS. STAPLETON BE INFORMED THAT CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY WAS ANXIOUS TO RECEIVE HER AND THAT HE COULD EASILY ASSEMBLE THE CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP TO MEET WITH HER ON SEPT 13, BUT IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO ARRANGE THE KIND OF GATHERING HE AND SHE HAD DISCUSSED OF ROUGHLY 10,000 CHRISTIANS IN THE COPTIC CATHEDRAL ON THAT DAY. ONLY DAY THAT COULD BE DONE WAS FRIDAY. MR. HERMINA VOLUNTEERED TO BE MRS. STAPLETON'S HOST, BUT CHARGE RESPONDED THAT PRESIDENCY WAS ALREADY WORKING ON NECESSARY ARRANGEMENTS. MR. HERMINA PLANS TO MEET STAPLETON PARTY AT AIRPORT AND WILL BE DELIGHTED TO SHOW HER CHRISTIAN SITES IN CAIRO, INCLUDING COPTIC CATHEDRAL. CHARGE SAID HE WOULD PASS ON MR. HERMINA'S MESSAGE AND AGREED TO MEET WITH HIM AGAIN AT NOON SEPT 9.

3. COMMENT: EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT MRS. STAPLETON COULD HAVE USEFUL MEETING WITH CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY LEADERS DESPITE IMPOSSIBILITY OF ARRANGING LARGE MEETING WITH CHRISTIAN CONGREGATIONS.  
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4. WE WILL COORDINATE MR. HERMINA'S PLANS WITH THOSE OF PRESIDENCY TOMORROW. IN ADDITION TO MEETING WITH CHRISTIAN LEADERS AS ARRANGED BY MR. HERMINA, WE WILL INFORM PRESIDENCY OF MRS. STAPLETON'S DESIRE TO VISIT THE PYRAMIDS AND THE ARCHEOLOGICAL MUSEUM. SOUND AND LIGHT AT PYRAMIDS IS IN ARABIC EVENING OF SEPT 12 AND ENGLISH EVENING SEPT 13, STARTING AT 7:30 PM AND LASTING ABOUT ONE HOUR. THERE ARE NUMEROUS RELIGIOUS AND OTHER SITES OF HISTORIC IMPORTANCE IN CAIRO AND WE CAN ARRANGE VISITS TO THEM AS DESIRED ON SHORT NOTICE.

5. EMBASSY HAS CONFIRMED RESERVATIONS FOR DR. AND MRS. STAPLETON ON TWA 803 DEPARTING CAIRO 0600 AND ARRIVING PARIS 1040 AND HAS REQUESTED RESERVATIONS ON AIR FRANCE 403 DEPARTING PARIS 1130 AND ARRIVING NICE 1250, ALL FOR SEPT 14. WE HAVE ALSO MADE BACK-UP RESERVATION FROM CAIRO TO NEW YORK ON TWA 803 FOR SEPT 14. RESERVATIONS FOR DR. MCBIRNIE AND MRS. MATTAR HAVE BEEN CONFIRMED ON BA 150 DEPARTING CAIRO 1230 ARRIVING LONDON 1650 SEPT 14.

6. RE AMMAN 7081, IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO HAVE PARTY'S PREFERENCE  
FOR FLIGHT TO CAIRO FOR OUR DISCUSSIONS TOMORROW WITH PRESI-  
DENCY AND MR. HERMINA. MATTHEWS

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